

*Background Material
for 29 October*

State Department review completed

TOP SECRET

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29 October 1962

SUMMARY CONTENTS

I. Castro, faced with a serious setback to his prestige, is evidently attempting to pressure the Soviet Union into supporting his demands for major US concessions prior to the implementation of the Soviet pledge to remove the offensive military equipment from Cuba. Surveillance on [redacted] (the most recent) indicates that construction and camouflage activity were continuing at the MRBM and IRBM sites in Cuba. [redacted]

II. Eight Soviet ships--four tankers and four dry cargo ships--are presently en route to Cuba. One of the tankers, the GROZNY, is just inside the quarantine zone--apparently dead in the water or proceeding at an extremely slow speed.

III. Moscow this morning published the text of the President's reply to Khrushchev's announcement on the withdrawal of Soviet missiles. The bloc public is being told that Khrushchev has earned "personal credit" for his stroke for peace. The emphasis being given throughout the bloc to a US pledge not to invade Cuba reflects Moscow's urge to salvage prestige within its sphere. Peiping, however, is backing Castro's demands for further US concessions, and is evidently sticking to its aim of making Moscow look bad.

IV. Four installations of the US-owned Creole Corporation in the Venezuelan oil fields were sabotaged yesterday morning. [redacted]

[redacted] Further attempts at sabotage elsewhere in Latin America can be expected.

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TOP SECRET

TOP SECRET

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U Thant, who intends to depart for Cuba on Tuesday with between six and ten neutral military officers, has asked for an indication from the President of what "assurances" the US is prepared to offer Cuba.

Little reaction has come in yet from Latin America on Khrushchev's dismantling announcement. Elsewhere in the free world the news is being greeted with jubilation, relief, and an occasional note of caution. The British Foreign Office has expressed official pleasure. The press in Western Europe is using such phrases as "unbelievably happy" and "enormously satisfying." The French are showing cautious optimism. In West Germany a note of apprehension about Berlin is still being sounded, but in West Berlin itself there are some signs of quiet relief.

Canada's Lester Pearson is quoted as saying that if the settlement can lead to progress on disarmament, "then we can be even more grateful to President Kennedy for his firm stand."

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TOP SECRET

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TOP SECRET

Approved For Release 2005/06/09 : CIA-RDP80B01676R001800010028-4

25X1

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I. The Situation in Cuba

Castro, faced with a serious setback to his prestige, is evidently attempting to pressure the Soviet Union into supporting his demands for major US concessions prior to the implementation of the Soviet pledge to remove the offensive military equipment from Cuba.

Castro's 28 October statement, issued shortly after publication of Khrushchev's letter of the same day to President Kennedy, listed five conditions which he said the US must meet before "guarantees against US aggression" can exist. These conditions are: (1) cessation of all commercial and economic pressure against Cuba; (2) an end to all "subversive activities" carried out against the Castro regime from the territory of the US and other "accomplice countries;" (3) cessation of "pirate attacks" on Cuba; (4) an end to violations of our air and naval space" by US aircraft and ships; (5) evacuation of the US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay.

Except for the reference in the body of Castro's statement, there has been no mention in domestic Cuban media of Khrushchev's 28 October letter to President Kennedy. Castro's statement, on the other hand, has been given heavy coverage. Special editions of Havana's two leading newspapers, including the Communist Hoy, were issued to cover Castro's statement, which was also given heavy play by Cuban radio stations, and in a speech later in the day by Raul Castro.

Raul ridiculed the idea that the US could be trusted to abide by any "non-aggression guarantee" unless Fidel's terms are met. He concluded: "Whatever happened, whatever President Kennedy says, Cuba will remain mobilized until its commander in chief orders the contrary." In this speech, Raul Castro also spelled out his brother's reference to the US Naval Base in terms which suggest that no immediate Cuban action is envisaged. He said: "Sooner or later, this (evacuation of the Base by the US) has to happen--and it has to happen, we reiterate once more, through peaceful means."

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TOP SECRET

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Approved For Release 2005/06/09 : CIA-RDP80B01676R001800010028-4

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Construction and improvement activity were continuing
[redacted] at the MRBM and IRBM sites in Cuba [redacted]

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Camouflage, including covering with canvas and the employment of natural concealment, was also continuing at the MRBM sites and was becoming more effective.

Activity at the IRBM sites was proceeding at a high rate. The number of vehicles noted at Guanajay site 1 increased from at least 44 [redacted] to at least 61 on [redacted]

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[redacted] Additional missile support equipment had also been moved to this site. At site 2 a significant amount of construction was completed [redacted]. Work was also continuing at the Remedios IRBM site [redacted]

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The photography [redacted] also provides additional evidence that all MRBM and IRBM sites were intended to have nuclear warhead bunkers.

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Approved For Release 2005/06/09 : CIA-RDP80B01676R001800010028-4

25X1

29 October 1962

II. SOVIET SHIPPING TO CUBA

Eight Soviet ships--four tankers and four dry cargo ships--are presently en route to Cuba. One of the tankers, the GROZNY, is just inside the quarantine zone--apparently dead in the water or proceeding at an extremely slow speed. One of the dry cargo ships, the BELOVODSK, is about a day away from entering the zone. In addition to the Soviet ships, one Czech freighter also is headed toward Cuba. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] none is believed to be carrying military equipment.

II-1

Approved For Release 2005/06/09 : CIA-RDP80B01676R001800010028-4

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29 October 1962

III. THE SITUATION IN THE BLOC

A. REACTION TO KHRUSHCHEV DISMANTLING ANNOUNCEMENT

Moscow has moved quickly to dramatize Khrushchev's 28 October offer to dismantle the Soviet bases in Cuba under UN supervision as a major step in guaranteeing world peace. Khrushchev's reference to US assurances against an invasion of Cuba is being highlighted in Soviet domestic propaganda in an apparent effort to convince the Soviet audience that unilateral US action was averted by the Soviet Premier's move.

Khrushchev's indication that the USSR wishes to take up negotiations with the US on broader international issues was reiterated by Soviet First Deputy Foreign Minister Kuznetsov on his arrival last night in New York. Neither Kuznetsov nor Khrushchev mentioned Berlin, suggesting that for the time being at least Moscow intends to play this issue in low key. The Soviets also avoided any suggestion of a link between Cuba and the Berlin situation in their 26 October overtures to the West Germans to use their influence toward a peaceful settlement of the Cuban crisis.

The Communist bloc's initial treatment of the US-Soviet exchange reflects the impact the Soviet backdown is bound to have on the USSR's position as leader of the bloc. East European press and radio comment attributes the Soviet decision to President Kennedy's assurances not to invade Cuba, but also reiterates Moscow's theme that Khrushchev deserves "personal credit" for preserving the peace.

In a brief dispatch, Radio Warsaw hinted at a possible settlement on other pressing international issues by stating that in this "new atmosphere" it may finally become possible to conduct negotiations on questions of great international significance. Belgrade, which was cautious in its comment earlier in the crisis, is now emphasizing the "statesmanlike" role played by Khrushchev in easing tensions.

The USSR apparently did not coordinate its move with the Castro regime. Aside from Castro's brief reference, Havana has not commented publicly on Khrushchev's message. Similarly, Moscow has only briefly reported Castro's

III-1

statement but has not commented on his demands. While the Soviet Union has declared its willingness to withdraw its missile bases from Cuba, it has indicated it will continue to support Castro and provide economic aid to help him maintain his regime.

Immediately prior to Khrushchev's 27 October letter calling for a reciprocal Soviet-US withdrawal of offensive weapons from Cuba and Turkey, the USSR reportedly attempted to bring pressure to bear on the Turkish government to fore-
swear unilaterally the use of missiles.

The US Embassy in Moscow reports that there does not seem to be any restrictions on tourist or business travel within the Soviet Union. According to one unconfirmed report, measures which were taken by the USSR to limit the movement of certain foreigners at the beginning of the Cuban crisis have now been lifted.

A terse Radio Peiping newscast reported the latest Soviet move without comment. But the bulk of Chinese reporting on Cuba continues to emphasize US military preparations and repeated pledges of Chinese support for Cuba. Ten thousand Chinese were paraded in the streets of Peiping on 28 October to hear regime spokesmen reiterate these pledges. Thus far, Peiping has been the only bloc capital to broadcast the text of Castro's statement demanding evacuation of Guantanamo.

Khrushchev's Cuban retreat will be used by the Chinese in their efforts to undermine confidence in Soviet leadership of Communist world affairs.

Peiping undoubtedly will portray Khrushchev's move toward a Cuban solution as weakness in the face of the "imperialist enemy." Albania, Peiping's European ally, already has reported that the Western press is regarding Khrushchev's letter as a "victory for American diplomacy."

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Next 1 Page(s) In Document Exempt

Approved For Release 2005/06/09 : CIA-RDP80B01676R001800010028-4

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25X1

29 October 1962

IV. NON-BLOC DEVELOPMENTS

U Thant said last evening that he intends to take between six and ten neutral military officers with him to Havana on Tuesday to begin inspection of Soviet missile and bomber sites. The officers will be supervised by Indian Brigadier Rikhye, U Thant's military adviser, who said that on arrival his men will be sent to the locations cited in US information and have them report on dismantling and removal. U Thant told US representatives at the United Nations that it would be helpful to him in his discussions with Cuban officials if the US could suspend reconnaissance flights and the shipping quarantine during his stay. He has also asked for an indication from the President of the "assurances" the US is prepared to offer Cuba.

Word on the official and public reaction in Latin America has not yet begun to come in. However, Venezuela's delegate to the UN, possibly representative of one line of thought, yesterday expressed his concern to our delegation lest the US get trapped into commitments in Cuba beyond the guarantee against "invasion."

The sabotage of four electrical substations of the US-owned Creole Corporation in the Lake Maracaibo oil fields early on 28 October probably was carried out by Venezuelan Communists

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Initial estimates of Creole officials were that about one sixth of Venezuela's daily production of 3 million barrels would be temporarily lost. These officials said it will be several days before it is known when production can be resumed.

Western European countries greeted the news of Khrushchev's decision to remove the missile bases with surprise, joy, relief, and some notes of caution. A British Foreign Office spokesman said the government was "pleased" by the news and by Khrushchev's agreement to accept UN inspection of the dismantling. The conservative Daily Telegraph commented that now that the USSR had accepted the "verification principle" in Cuba, "a long-barred door may have been set ajar."

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Approved For Release 2005/06/09 : CIA-RDP80B01676R001800010028-4

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The French showed cautious optimism, seeing the possibility of additional surprises. In Canada, Liberal leader Pearson remarked that if the settlement can lead to progress on disarmament, "then we can be even more grateful to President Kennedy for his firm stand."

Norwegian Prime Minister Gerhardson said "This is an almost unbelievably happy outcome of a situation that could have had the most disastrous consequences." Swedish Foreign Minister Nilson described the news as "enormously satisfying," while Bonn's All-German Affairs Minister Lemmer found it "wonderful, astounding." The opposition Frankfurter Rundschau warned, however, that Khrushchev "will certainly try to compensate for the direct retreat in Cuba with a diplomatic offensive at another place."

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The Copenhagen radio on 28 October expressed the view that the reason for Khrushchev's "capitulation" was to be found in two events of the previous night: an alleged announcement by Ambassador Stevenson to Allied ambassadors that the US would knock out the missile and bomber bases within 24 hours if work on them was not stopped forthwith; and the mobilization of US transport aircraft, "which could have no other meaning than that the US was preparing to occupy the Soviet Cuban bases."

Turkish Foreign Minister Erkin has been quoted by Agence France Presse as voicing his belief that tensions will "fade away" with the dismantling of the missile bases. Damascus radio broadcast that Premier al-Azm has sent a cable to Khrushchev praising his "brave and noble" stand. A Japanese Government statement calls the latest Kennedy-Khrushchev exchange "a matter for much rejoicing."

TOP SECRET

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Next 8 Page(s) In Document Exempt

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